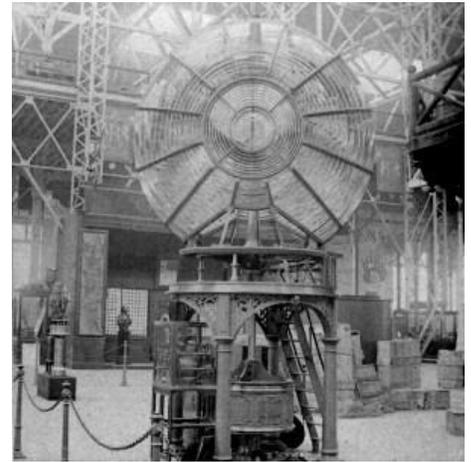


Best in Class

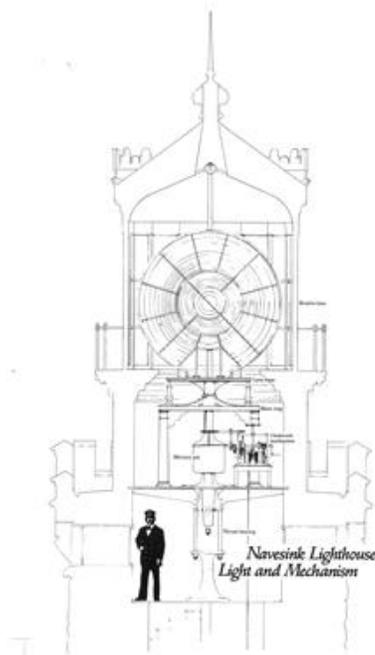
Written by: Nicholas Wood

The 2nd order lens at Twin Lights is a well-traveled light, having been disassembled, moved, and reassembled no less than 10 times. It saw nightly service at the lighthouse for nearly 51 years. Weighing approximately 3,000 pounds it made a full revolution every ten seconds and reached a maximum brilliance of 25 million candlepower. All of these mechanical wonders served one purpose – to help sailors at sea locate their position up to 22 miles at sea.

The lens began its long journey at the Henry Lapaute Optical Glass Company located in Paris, France. It was created in high style with decorative trim and ornaments for exhibition at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. While there, it caught the eye of the Chairman of the Lighthouse Board, Captain Schley, who promptly purchased it for use in the United States.



The 2nd Order Fresnel Lens at the Chicago World’s Fair.



Installation Plans for the 2nd Order Lens.

The lens spent the next five years in motion, traveling to subsequent World’s Fairs as a display piece before finding a home at the Navesink Light Station in 1898. The Twin Lights’ larger than average lantern room and elevation made it the perfect location to test the new 2nd Order Bivalve lens. The two-sided lens installed at Twin Lights was the largest of its type ever ordered by the United States.

The lens last departed the lighthouse in March of 1951 after Twin Lights was decommissioned and was installed at the Boston Museum of Science where it remained on display for 28 years. It returned home in 1979 thanks to a partnership between the New Jersey Park Service, the Twin Lights Historical Society, and the Rumson Garden Club. Its final move was a short one, relocating it from the opposite end of the Power House to its present location within its lantern room like enclosure where visitors can enjoy it today!